1:Herskovits & Herskovits 2-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

798 797 The other white man was the Catholic missionary who for years had been living in the Gran Rio. He was a friend of the Saramacca people, and they liked him. Now this white man wanted to see Dahomey. He said that he, too, had a strong God who protected him. He asked so many times that they at last promised to take him there. But when he got to Pempeh he fell asleep, and he slept till . . . till they reached the Granman's country. So his life was saved. The gods, knowing that he was a friend of the Saramacca people, did not want to kill him. They put him to sleep until Dahomey was well out of reach.

"And this is what happened to you, Bak'a. The gods did not want to hurt you, so you did not see."

2

133 Past these rapids and another stretch of rough water, and then before us lay the highest falls of the Saramacca. To the right, over a ledge of rock spreading in an unbroken sweep across its entire width poured the Gran Rio, the [361] river up which lay the villages of the Loango clan, and beyond, the untrodden jungle which barricaded the way to the country of the Indians, and the basin of the Amazon. To the left was the final bit of fast water that remained between us and the village where the Granman awaited us. We were at last in the Pikien Rio.

Here the stream narrowed, and we could see on both banks the people who were waiting to see us pass. The [974] gay colors of the women's cloths were brilliant against the background of green, and their hallooing reached our ears above the rush of the water. A canoe with several young men came alongside.

"We are here to help you with your boats. We have been sent by the Granman. Fire three shots to let him know you are in the Pikien Rio."

576 [201] We fired, and instantly there was an answering salute of three guns. With the reinforcement of paddlers, it did not take long to reach the island which separated us from the landing place of Asindopo Lantiwe. Here all strangers

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

is used as a living-room; cooking is sometimes carried on there, but more often in an open communal kitchen used by the entire village. Some towns have several such open sheds.

We enter the hut where the headman of the village lives, and find him lying in his hammock. It is perhaps a bit of conscious arrogance, to demonstrate his independence of the white man, that the captain does not rise to greet us. He rises, however, to greet Abaisa.

"Well, friend, how are you?" we begin. In talkee-talkee the question runs: *"So, matti, fie you tang?"*

He replies civilly, complaining a little, perhaps. We offer him a few leaves of tobacco, always acceptable. While we parley with the chief, the men of the village are carrying our equipment up from the corials to the village. This they always do, without being asked and without being paid. Even small children take part in the portage. Nothing is ever stolen.

Quite conscious of the heat inside the dark hut, we do not palaver long. Leaving the two chiefs lolling in hammocks we pass out of the breast-high doorway into the clearing, and go about examining the living-quarters and the people. This is a village of the Saramaccaner tribe, descended from the Saramacca rebels of two hundred years ago. All the huts and villages of this tribe are quite similar. Among the Aucaner tribe, descended from the Ouca rebels, are villages of a different type.

One does not doubt the good intentions of the Moravian Brothers and certain Catholics who have established missions at a few points on the rivers. But their evangelical efforts have

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

797 done no little harm. Bush Negroes are not converted to Christianity except in a most superficial way; in moments of stress they quickly revert to the jungle gods. The mission stations incongruously bring into the South American bush not only the God of Israel but also his tribal taboos concerning clothing. The missionaries censure the idea of nakedness, despite the fact that the wearing of clothing produces a higher death-rate among the Christianized Negroes. If a black, drenched in the torrents of frequent rain, is dressed only in a scanty loin-cloth, the sun soon dries and warms his skin. If, on the other hand, he is swathed in flimsy cotton cloth that becomes soaked with water, there is an evaporation and radiation of heat from his body which leaves him chilled and cold. He is then an easy prey to pneumonia or tropical malaria, since his lowered resistance may permit the dormant parasites already present in the blood to proliferate. Thus, imported ideas of sin raise the pneumonia and malaria death-rate.

291 Bush Negro clothing is simple and effective. While working on the river the men wear only a short loin-cloth, consisting of a small piece of gaudily striped cotton goods. It is held in place by a string of plaited grass, called *cumu* grass. On full-dress occasions the Bush Negro dons another garment, a toga thrown over one shoulder and caught with a knot. The *camissa*, as it is called, is usually of variegated squares and bits of bright cotton sewn together. The brilliant hues against the black skins of the natives make a study in colourful contrast.

The women wear either one or two garments. The com-

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

When there is a conflict between villages over their hunting and fishing territories, the captains and bosseias of each town meet on some neutral ground and arbitrate the matter. Then, indeed, the parley becomes wordy and rhetorical. Each cause is championed with long speeches, setting forth oratorically the rights and conditions involved. But once an agreement is arrived at, the matter is closed.

Local disputes, excluding those over women, are not nearly so common or so serious as they are among civilized white men. There is a minimum of quarrelling among the Djukas; they get along together in an almost idyllic way. Wherever there are women, there will, of course, be quarrelling, for, in the words of Confucius, "Disorder does not come from heaven, but is brought about by women." Outside of this factor there is little friction in the Bush Negro community. Their highly communalized government works exceedingly well.

The Granman and his captains have an annual council to make laws for the coming year. This and other assemblies are known as *krutu*. The captains and bosseias from surrounding villages concentrate at some important town to meet the Granman there. The Council near Gansee, the trading-post, included the villages of Nu, Lombe, Biodoti, Ganya Condree, and Adawai. Jankoeso refused to hold his parley in the town proper, although Gansee is the largest village in the entire tribe, because there is a Christian mission station there, conducted by the Moravian Brothers. Jankoeso is in favour of retaining the ancestral gods of the jungle, and does not look with favour upon the white proselytizers.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

341 that point has no further permanent habitations of the Bush
103 Negroes. Past the realm of the Aucaners on the Lawa River (the confluence of which with the Tapanahoni goes to form the Marowyne) we find the continuation of the Boni tribe, consisting of the villages of Tahbiki, Pulumuffo, the seat of the Granman, Loka, Papai-Seton, Agodai, Komuntibo, Cottica (the only Boni village on Dutch territory, but whose inhabitants also owe allegiance to the French), Akuba, and the last of all the Bush Negro villages, Assisi, past the mouth of the far Assisi Creek.

177 The Bonis, although the most remote of the Bush Negroes from the plantations from which they originally escaped as slaves, have certainly succumbed the most to the influences of the white civilization. Even the village of the Saramaccaner tribe, Santi Gron, only some twenty miles from Paramaribo, maintains in true aboriginal fashion its African customs and its heathen gods.

797 The French Catholic priests have been more successful in making converts among the Boni than have the Dutch among the other tribes. In one village, however, we saw the usual heathen fetishes on full display, but we were told that they only afforded real protection to those who *believed* in them. Some of these tribesmen wear trousers and the headcloth of the French Guiana Town Negroes. We have even heard it whispered that some of the Boni own shoes, which
[689] is an unspeakable offence against the code among any of the other tribes.

Although the huts are of Africanesque architecture, similar

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

784 These food trafers are sometimes chosen by the individual,
262 and are acquired also by inheritance. A certain Bush Negro
[424 got his trafer in this way: His grandmother had a vision,
787] called *papa winti,* and she informed her grandson that she had been possessed. This made him feel the spirit of Cromanti. In that bad state he got the *idée fixe* that shooting a turtle would be reprehensible and dangerous. This animal then became his tabooed food, and for the rest of his life it is trafer so far as he is concerned.

797 So far only a slight attempt has been made to Christianize the Djukas. The Catholics and Moravian Brothers have established mission stations at a few points along the rivers. Their efforts at conversion appear on the whole to be unsuccessful. The Bush Negroes are converted in small numbers and very superficially; in moments of stress they will revert back to their jungle deities. The whole spirit of Christian customs is foreign to their mode of life. They have the Gran
776 Gadu, an adequate enough image of divine power. Their
782 prayers are sometimes said directly to him, or they pray to their ancestors to intercede with the Gran Gadu for aid. Sometimes the prayer is said by being beaten out on the tom-
[778] tom, for the tomtom is sacred, and the throbs of the great

/198 cont./
167 754 old woman of 90, A..., who died in Asisi in January, 1957. Having lived with Creoles in her youth, she had come back to live in her native village for at least 30 years and had never given occasion for any unfavorable remark. Nevertheless, upon her death it appeared that she had wisi.

771 829 179 Attitude toward Christianity. The Refugee Blacks, who are acquainted better than one might believe with the conceptions of the populations in the midst of whom they live, have a clear feeling of the relationship which exists between their metaphysical and moral conceptions and those of Christianity. They think they worship the same god as the Christians, in a completely different way but just as sound. They have no animosity [799] whatever toward the Catholic and Protestant clergy, and most of them agree willingly to wearing crosses or medals. But they have not the least intention of abandoning their beliefs for that. They do not perceive the contradiction and do not understand that people might want to oblige them to choose.

851 171 Like the Creole gold miners, they attach great importance to baptism, considered as an obia protective against the dangers of the bush. On Christmas, 1957 they were strongly impressed 165 797 by the accidental death of a Djuka Christian living at the Kotika school. He refused to observe mourning for his wife [688] according to the custom of the Refugee Blacks, and used to go [273] to drink in the cabarets of the Creole villages. On Christmas [784] evening, when drunk, he drowned himself. That was attributed to a suprahuman punishment. We heard /199/ the following reflection on this subject: "He was baptized and he drowned himself just the same. That is therefore not worth the trouble."

61 581 571 Actually, the matrilineal structure of the Refugee Blacks and their conception of marriage form an irreducible cleavage, which appears immediately as soon as one leaves the metaphysical conceptions to pass to the plane of practical living.

/298 cont./

114 Here desirous of remaining on the plane of strict scientific objectivity, we shall avoid entering the discussion of the benefit springing from this action, which, moreover, would necessitate a long development. We shall limit ourselves to showing that it appears to us to be doomed to failure.

871 177 --The experiment of schooling has been made for more than 30 years among the Boni in the village of Kotika. Half a dozen children, doing well in their studies, left for Surinam and broke with their native group. In the others, the teaching received left only faint traces. As a matter of fact, there is no room in a normal intelligence to receive at the same time the mass of technical knowledge necessary for holding one's own in the society of the Refugee Blacks and ordinary school instruction. One necessarily drives out the other; now the Boni are extremely fond of their free life on the great river, which assures them very satisfactory material conditions of living.

[829]

797 177 184 --Evangelization has been carried on with perseverance for more than 200 years with the Refugee Blacks of Surinam. It has not given appreciable results. It has been the same in French Guiana with the action carried on with the Saramaka working /299/ near the communes of the coast (1), and more recently with the Boni of the Upper Maroni.

[648]

1. The Saramaka not only have no tendency to be converted, but they exert a significant influence on the population of the communes. On the Oyapok the Saramaka healer has numerous clients, and in spite of the clergy's interdiction, many women go to the possession dances of the Papa gudu serpent gods.

[756] [787]